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BROMYARD RURAL DISTRICT

HEREFORDSHIRE

ANNUAL REPORT

on the

STATE of the PUBLIC HEALTH

for the Year

1948

Staff of the Public Health Department

Medical Officer of Health	...	...	H. F. GREEN, M.A., M.B., D.P.H. (Resigned on 31st May, 1948) M. J. PLEYDELL, M.C., M.D., D.P.H. (Appointed on 1st June, 1948)
Clerk	MISS S. DENSHAM
Sanitary Inspector	J. N. S. HARRISON, M.S.I.A., M.I.E.T. (Telephone No.: Bromyard 128)

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Telephone No.: Leominster 95.

To the Chairman and Members of the Bromyard Rural District Council

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

I have the honour to present my Annual Report for the year 1948, which has been compiled in accordance with the Ministry of Health Circular 3/49.

The conditions in the hop-yards have again shown considerable improvement this year. New quarters for the pickers were provided at seventeen farms, and in general a much higher standard was shown in the preparation of living accommodation. One of the most important defects noted at four farms was the absence of external stairways to quarters above the ground floor, an essential safety precaution in the event of fire. It is hoped that these will be provided in the coming season. The provision of camp supervisors was found to be a great asset in assisting with day to day maintenance of the camps, and a spell of fine weather during the picking resulted in more satisfactory living conditions inside the quarters. Two cases of Scarlet Fever were notified in children in the hop-pickers' quarters at one farm, but it is satisfactory to note that this infection did not spread. In addition to the usual provision by voluntary bodies of medical attention for minor ailments amongst the pickers, district nurses were available at local clinics set up for this purpose. These clinics were poorly attended, but in general it may be said that the standard of health amongst the pickers was high.

At present a housing and water survey is being carried out throughout the district. When completed this should give valuable information for assessing the present housing needs, and should help in the planning of future developments, besides being of assistance in determining the relative values of comprehensive and small water schemes.

In conclusion, I would like to record my appreciation of the help afforded me during the year by Mr. Harrison, your Sanitary Surveyor.

M. J. PLEYDELL,
Medical Officer of Health.

SECTION A.—STATISTICS AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS OF THE AREA

Area (in acres)	...	...	...	...	...	...	61,114
Population	...	...	...	...	...	...	7,408
Number of inhabited houses (end of 1948) according to the Rate Books	...	...	...	...	...	...	2,056
Rateable Value	...	...	...	...	...	...	£16,614
Sum represented by a Penny Rate	...	...	...	...	...	...	£72 10 1

EXTRACT FROM THE VITAL STATISTICS OF THE YEAR :

			Total	Male	Female
LIVE BIRTHS (Legitimate)	...	...	119	62	57
(Illegitimate)	...	...	10	5	5
			—	—	—
Total	...	...	129	67	62
STILL BIRTHS (Legitimate)	...	...	3	3	0
DEATHS	...	...	68	31	37
DEATHS OF INFANTS UNDER ONE YEAR OF AGE (Legitimate)	...	...	7	4	3
(Illegitimate)	...	...	1	1	0
			—	—	—
Total	...	...	8	5	3

COMPARABLE DATA FOR ENGLAND AND WALES, 1948:

Birth Rate (per 1,000 of the estimated resident population)	...	...	17.4
Birth Rate for England and Wales	...	...	17.9
Still Birth rate (per 1,000 live and still births)	...	...	22.7
Still Birth rate for England and Wales	...	...	23.1
Death rate (per 1,000 of the estimated resident population)	...	...	9.2
Death Rate for England and Wales	...	...	10.9
Infant Mortality rate (per 1,000 live births)	...	...	62.0
Infant Mortality Rate for England and Wales	...	...	34.0

SECTION B.—GENERAL PROVISION OF HEALTH SERVICES FOR THE AREA

LABORATORY FACILITIES

Laboratory facilities continue to be available at the County Public Health Laboratory, Hereford, which is under the administration of the Medical Research Council.

CLINICS

There are no clinics provided by the Local Authority.

Under the County Council and Regional Hospital Board schemes the following Clinic facilities are available to residents in the district:—

Child Welfare Centre: In Frome Bank, Bromyard on alternate Thursdays, at 1.30 p.m.

Venereal Diseases: At the County Council Hospital, Hereford, on Wednesdays and Fridays.

The schemes also provide for Maternity and Child Welfare Clinics, Paediatric, Ear, Nose and Throat, and Eye Clinics. During the year a Speech Therapist has been appointed to undertake treatment of those children suffering from speech defect. Children are referred to these Clinics as and when required, on the recommendation of the School Medical or Infant Welfare Authority, or at the request of the Medical Practitioner.

I am indebted to Mr. J. N. S. Harrison for the following statement (Sections C to E) furnished under Article 27 (Sub-section 18) of the Sanitary Officers (outside London) Regulations.

SECTION C.—SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE AREA

WATER SUPPLIES

1. Number and results of Bacteriological and chemical examinations of water:

(a) Of raw water supply.			
Bacteriological	—	Satisfactory	18
		Polluted	33
		Total	51
Chemical	—	Satisfactory	1
		Polluted	3
		Total	4

(b) Of water after chlorination: Nil.

(c) Liability to plumbosolvency: Nil.

(d) Action in respect of contamination.

Informal notices were given to owners where water was found to be polluted. Wells were cleaned out and the water re-tested. Two cottages were provided with piped water from a private source to remedy pollution. Notices served: 55.

(e) Number of Dwelling houses and number of Population supplied from water mains or standpipes. No record.

A survey of all property is in operation to ascertain the water supply and conditions.

2. With the exception of the Council houses at Wolferlow, Pencombe, Cradley and Stoke Lacy, all piped supplies are privately owned. A few complaints of water shortages were reported during the year; local arrangements were made to overcome this temporary shortage.

Two hundred visits were made to investigate complaints and water supplies generally. Fifty-five samples were taken which showed thirty-six to be polluted. A considerable number of these visits were made to find water supplies for housing sites.

The Council are considering an alternative to the comprehensive water scheme for the district by arranging smaller individual schemes to cover the greater part of the district which is short of water. Six areas of supply have been suggested as follows: Cradley from a spring; Linton, Norton, and surrounding area from a borehole; Pencombe from springs; Whitbourne from springs; Bredenbury and surrounding area from a borewell; Burley Gate and surrounding area from a spring.

I regret to report the wanton damage and pollution of the Public well at Norton by unknown persons. Covers were removed and old tins and other rubbish thrown into the well. It was immediately cleared and chlorinated and the Council have now ordered concrete covers to protect same.

DRAINAGE AND SEWERAGE

I have approved new drainage works to 47 houses and 26 other buildings; also new approved sewage treatment tanks have been installed at 41 houses and 5 other buildings. All new drains were tested by water pressure, and were provided with all necessary traps, ventilators and a sufficient number of inspection chambers. Water closets were provided in all cases where new drainage systems were installed.

The only sewer vested in the Council is that serving Bishop's Frome. The outfall is an open ditch on the Ledbury Road, which gives rise to complaints in warm weather. The Council's Sewage Engineer has prepared a scheme for the sewerage of the village and the provision of treatment plant for same.

The Housing survey at present being carried out will give fuller records on house drainage and sewerage.

As a result of County Council roadwork and the piping of an open roadside ditch at Storridge, five properties which had previously discharged their drainage into this ditch were prevented from doing so without prior notice. I was able to arrange that the owners provide suitable soakaway pits for their drainage.

FLOODING, RIVER AND STREAM POLLUTION

No complaints of flooding or pollution of rivers or streams have been received. The district is generally free from flooding.

REFUSE DISPOSAL

There is no organised collection of refuse in the district. A few requests have been received for collection. The Sanitary Inspector advised on suitable means of disposal in each case.

The Council obtained estimates for the collection of refuse for Cradley, but the estimated costs were considered too high.

RODENT CONTROL

No complaints received. No action to report.

DISINFECTION

Number of houses disinfected for

(a) Bed bugs, etc.	...	...	Nil
(b) Infectious disease	...	...	8

The only other disinfection was the precautionary disinfection to combat possible fly nuisance, etc., of all hop-pickers' latrines, etc., during the season and two Boys' Schools Annual Camps. Number of premises so treated: 78.

SANITARY INSPECTION OF THE AREA

INSPECTIONS UNDER				Number	Informal Notices	Statutory Notices	Notices Complied
Housing Acts	...	...	...	1280	17	2	15
Public Health Acts	...	...	...	15	15	—	17
Cowsheds and Dairies	...	...	...	67	47	—	45
Factories and Workshops	...	...	...	5	—	—	—
Bakehouses	...	...	...	2	—	—	—
Hop-pickers' Quarters	...	...	...	409	149	—	153
Nuisances (Complaints)	...	...	...	95	25	—	25
Water Supplies	...	...	...	200	52	3	45
Infectious Disease, etc.	...	...	...	86	—	—	—
Food, Shops	...	...	...	7	—	—	—

FACTORIES AND WORKSHOPS

INSPECTIONS UNDER THE FACTORIES ACT, 1937

Premises				Number on Register	Inspections	Number of Written notices	Occupiers prosecuted
(i) Factories in which Sections 1, 2, 3, 4, and 6 are to be enforced by Local Authorities	...	...	...	1	1	0	0
(ii) Factories not included in (i) in which Section 7 is enforced by the Local Authority	...	...	...	1	4	0	0
(iii) Other premises in which Section 7 is enforced by the Local Authority (excluding out-workers' premises)	...	...	...	0	0	0	0
TOTAL				2	5	—	—

Defects: No defects were found in these factories.

CAMPING SITES AND VAN DWELLINGS

Three camping Sites in the District are licenced. They are supplied with piped water and bucket chemical Closets.

There has been one complaint of a van overstaying the statutory period. After the Council had agreed to take statutory action the van was moved to a new site and the applicant is proceeding with the necessary applications under the Public Health Acts and Town and Country Planning Acts.

HOP-PICKERS' LODGING AND ACCOMMODATION

A considerable improvement was made to Hop-pickers' accommodation during the year. Many of these improvements being brought about by the informal notices served as a result of the additional inspections and visits made possible with the help of an assistant provided by the Council during the hop-picking season.

New barracks providing accommodation for 1,200 pickers were erected during the year at 12 farms. Other improvements include two units of 10 bucket latrines in brick and cement; piped water supply laid on to the quarters; new cookhouses and feeding room; as well as numerous improvements to the comfort of the pickers such as hot water supply, wash sinks, electricity, etc.

Improvements were also made at the farms and kilns themselves. At Leighton Court, Stretton Grandison, for instance, the most up-to-date hop drying plant has been installed working on the continuous drying system and incorporation travelling conveyors. Preparation has also been made at this farm to use mechanical hop pickers in future; this would replace 600 pickers by approximately 40 assistants. From the Council's point of view the sooner mechanical pickers are available the better, as it will cut the problem of providing and maintaining hop-pickers' accommodation.

This year we were able to visit all farms before occupation, and all latrines were sprayed with DDT to combat fly nuisance. The farmers have been encouraged to use Gammexane. On the whole the farmers had made a real effort to improve conditions this year, but I regret to say that this improvement was not reflected in the cleanliness of the pickers and the maintenance of their quarters after occupation. As a result of this it is natural that the majority of the complaints were concerned with refuse thrown about and dirty latrines.

A conference of Authorities concerned with Hop-pickers and their accommodation was held at Hereford during April. Dr. Brunyate of the Ministry of Health attended together with the medical and official staff of the Local Authorities. Suggestions were made for the improvement in the standard of the byelaws.

SECTION D.—HOUSING

The Council owns 26 houses as follows: Heathfields, 2; Cricks Green, 4; Pencombe, 4; Much Cowarne, 4; Stoke Lacy, 4; Wolferlow, 2; Avenbury, 2; Cradley, 4.

These include the four new houses at Cradley. There are a pair of Swedish Type timber houses nearing completion at Pencombe.

The four houses at Cricks Green and the four at Much Cowarne were completely overhauled and re-decorated this year.

Number of Council Houses built during the year:

Permanent, brick	4
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Number of Privately built houses during the year:

Permanent, brick	4
Temporary	1

Total	5
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Flats—1 house into 3 flats
 Flats—1 house into 2 flats

Total	...	5
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Total housing units provided	...	14
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A Housing and water survey is being carried out. Up to the end of the year 715 of the 2,000 properties have been visited. When the survey is complete and the results analysed a true up-to-date record of the Housing conditions will be available. A considerable number of Housing visits are due to building licence applications.

Number of Demolition Orders made	...	...	0
Number of Closing Orders made	...	...	4
Number of void houses demolished	...	...	0

INSPECTION OF DWELLING HOUSES DURING THE YEAR:

(1) (a) Total number of dwelling houses inspected for housing defects under Public Health and Housing Acts	...	...	...	1250
(b) Number of inspections made for the purpose	...	...	...	1280
(2) Number of dwelling houses found not to be, in all respects, fit for human habitation	...	...	...	1145

SECTION E.

MILK SUPPLIES

Visits to Dairy Farms	...	...	...	...	67
Number of Dairies and Cowsheds repaired or improved during the year and approved for:					
(a) ordinary milk production	...	...	...	...	15
(b) designated milk production	5
Number of Samples taken	5

MEAT AND FOOD PREMISES INSPECTED	7
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ICE CREAM

There is no registered manufacturer in the district.

OTHER FOODS

There were only a few tins of various foods condemned when surrendered by the owner.

SECTION F.—PREVALENCE OF INFECTIOUS DISEASE

WHOOPIING COUGH.—Twenty-nine cases of whooping cough were notified in the course of the year. The majority of these cases occurred in the first quarter of the year, and chiefly affected children over two years of age—an important factor since the fatality rate from this illness is greatest in the first year of life.

MEASLES.—Twenty cases of measles were notified. These occurred chiefly during the summer months—a favourable factor since pulmonary complications are less common than during the winter months—and mainly affected pre-school children of the age group one to four years.

SCARLET FEVER.—Six cases of scarlet fever were notified, two of these occurring in children living in hop-pickers' quarters. These children, who were suffering from a virulent form of the infection were removed to the Isolation Hospital, Credenhill. Routine precautionary measures were taken and no further cases resulted.

POLIOMYELITIS.—One case of poliomyelitis occurred in the district. The child was removed to the Hereford County Hospital and made a satisfactory recovery. Contacts of the case were advised concerning the precautionary measures that should be taken.

FOOD POISONING.—Three cases of food poisoning were notified. The infection was caused by salmonella bovis morbificans and originated outside the district. Advice was given to those affected regarding measures to be taken to prevent spread of the infection, and no secondary cases resulted.

DIPHTHERIA IMMUNISATION

As from July 5th, 1948, duties relating to diphtheria immunisation were transferred to the County Health Authority. The following figures are presented with the consent of the County Medical Officer.

Number of children at 31st December, 1948 who had completed a course of immunisation at any time before that date (i.e. at any time since 1st January, 1934).

Age at 31. 12. 48	Under 1	1	2	3	4	5-9	10-14	Total under 15	Estimated mid-year child population 1948		
									Under 5	5-14	Total
i.e. Born in year	1948	47	46	45	44	39- 43	34- 38				
	9	60	77	67	47	388	390	1038	674	1140	1814

These figures indicate that 38.6% of the child population under 5 years of age is protected against diphtheria by immunisation. This compares favourably with last year's figure of 33.4%. In the 5—14 year group 68.2% of the children is immunised as compared with 68.0% in 1947; while figures for the age group 0—15 years show that 57.2% of the children has been immunised. Without a doubt, more children would be immunised in their early years if there were better transport facilities from the outlying districts.

TUBERCULOSIS

At the end of 1948, the Tuberculosis Register contained the names of eighteen males and nine females, who normally reside in the Council's district.

During the year, six new cases were notified, five on account of Pulmonary Tuberculosis, and one because of the presence of the disease in parts of the body other than the lungs. During the same period, four deaths of persons suffering from the disease occurred; three left the district; three recovered; and one was removed from the Register.

CAUSES OF DEATH (all ages)

DISEASE	Males	Females	Total
Tuberculosis	1	3	4
Cancer (all forms)	4	7	11
Diabetes	0	1	1
Intra-cranial vascular lesions	5	3	8
Diseases of the Heart and Arteries	11	14	25
Bronchitis, Pneumonia and other respiratory diseases	3	2	5
Diseases of the Digestive system	1	1	2
Nephritis	1	1	2
Congenital conditions (at birth)	2	1	3
Suicide	0	1	1
Road Traffic Accidents	1	0	1
All other causes	1	4	5